1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

137 The cardamom grows in the deep and damp recesses of the evergreen forests on the Western Ghats. Many varieties of beautiful ferns and the useful rattan cane creeper and *võṭé* reeds are also found close to the mountain streams flowing in these forests.

136 Coorg fauna is the same as that of the rest of south India. In its forests are found elephant, tiger, bison, panther, boar, bear, porcupine, deer, and wild dog and jackal. The extensive clearing of the mountain-sides for coffee and orange plantations, the general love of hunting, and the possession of firearms have resulted in the decimation of wild life in Coorg.

II

131 The isolation and inaccessibility of Coorg, with its steep mountains, dense forests, and heavy rainfall, contributed to the maintenance and elaboration of the distinctive mode of life and culture of Coorgs. The Lingāyaṭ Rājas, who saw certain political and military advantages in the natural isolation of Coorg, tried to increase it. Richter tells us that they closed down certain roads leading to Mercara, and prohibited travelling by them.[1]

But under British rule the existing roads were improved and new ones were built. Nowadays buses run regularly on all the main roads connecting different parts of Coorg with each other, and Coorg with her neighbours. Yet even now no railway line passes through Coorg and this restricts the amount of contact it has with the rest of India.

The isolation of Coorg in the past was far from absolute. Contact always did exist with neighbours, though such contact was limited and difficult. For instance, Coorgs in south-west Coorg went annually in caravans to Malabar to sell their surplus rice, and to buy jaggery,[2] coconuts, coconut oil, tobacco, and areca-nuts. Coorgs in south-east Coorg bought cattle in Mysore and went on pilgrimages to certain shrines like the Shrikaṇṭēshwara Temple in Nanjanagūḍ. Coorgs in central and north Coorg went on pilgrimages to the Subrahmaṇya Temple in South Canara.

184 Though Coorg is a very small country, it shows considerable cultural diversity. The areas to the north and east of Mercara, and

[1] Op. cit., p. 426.

[2] Crude brown sugar, either in the form of square blocks or small round cakes, made from sugar-cane juice or the saps of various palms.

[257]

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

764
539

Thou hast built the solid gate,
And the courts around the house.
Oh! my father; yesterday
Fallen on the bed of sickness,
And to-day before the feet
Of the Lord of earth and heaven,
And tomorrow, like the sun
Setting in the cloudy sky,
Thou shalt sink into the grave.
Woe! my father, thou art gone!
Woe! my father, gone for ever!

529
796

4. POPULAR FESTIVALS OF THE COORGS.

The festivals of the Coorgs are not numerous. A weekly day of rest is recognised as little by the Coorgs as by other Hindus.

The two great annual festivals take place in quick succession towards the end of the year. The *Kávéri-feast* in Tulámása i. e. the time of the sun's entering into the sign of Libra in October, and the *Huttari* or Harvest-feast in November or December.

Before the monsoon in April and may the *Bhagavati-festival* is observed all over Coorg and in August, generally at the first break of the monsoon, the *Keilmurta* or festival of arms, is celebrated by the youths and men of Coorg.

796
484
788

a. The Kávéri-feast.

About the middle of October all Coorg prepares for the grand festival of Kávéri. The sun has gained the ascendency over the monsoon clouds. A few passing showers only may still be expected. The rice valleys are clothed with rich paddy approaching maturity; the forests and grass hills resplendent with the freshness and beauty of spring. Every Coorg house sends one or two representatives to Tala-Kávéri. Also pil-

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

grims from Malayálam, Tulu and Mysore repair to the sacred place by thousands. Distinguished amongst these are the Brahmini-widows—those sad figures, clothed with reddish brown garments, one end of which covers the shorn head. A bundle under one arm they trudge along, supported by a stick; perhaps they come by their own impulse, perhaps in the name and for the benefit of some sick relation. The nearer the pilgrims approach the end of their journey, the more frequent and the more numerous are the festive caravans of men, women and children in holiday-costume, who now rest in picturesque groups on the shady banks of streams, now proceed in gay defiles over the grassy hills. With the last ascent of a small elevation near the foot of the Tala-Káveri-hill the view of the upper basin of the Káveri valley, which is rather wide and flanked by steep hills, suddenly bursts upon us. The Bhágamandala temple with its copper roof is conspicuous in the middle of the valley and close to the Káveri. A few rows of houses near it are changed into a busy mart. Thousands of people move to and fro, and the humming noise of the multitude sounds like the distant surf of the ocean. Hundreds are engaged in bathing in the sacred stream before they enter the temple, which forms a large square with an open centre like a Coorg house. Along the road pedlars are squatted behind their paltry wares which are spread under a flimsy awning. Mendicant Sanyásis with hollow sounding conch and brass gong in hand push, blowing and ringing, through the crowd. Hourly the multitude increases; new arrivals descend from all the neighbouring mountain pathways into the valley. Hundreds of people have already proceeded to reach the Káveri source, in order to build for themselves and their expected friends sheltering booths against the cold damp night air. A pathway leads over paddy-fields through steep jungle and over rocky mountain ridges to the sacred spot. As they ascend, they shout "Náráyana, Oh!